



The District's Dime

Going Beyond the Budget Book

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In Memory of Marion Barry, Jr.

By Ed Lazere

We at the DC Fiscal Policy Institute mourn the passing of Marion Barry, Jr., an unparalleled champion for the dignity and well-being of DC residents.

Mayor Barry understood and sympathized with District residents who struggle to make ends meet. He gave a voice to those who often feel powerless and ignored. Among numerous accomplishments, he gave many DC residents their first job -- which they remember and appreciate -- an important reminder of what government can do and how important a job is to someone's dignity and sense of self-worth.

We fondly remember working with Councilmember Barry in a number of ways to improve the lives of DC residents. Most notably, he was a champion of efforts to expand job training for adults, require businesses in DC to provide paid sick leave to their workers, and increase funding for affordable housing.

Barry perhaps stood out most for his unabashed approach to doing what he thought was right. In one small anecdote we remember, Barry was speaking at a DC Council hearing when the Chairman interjected to say "Your time is up." Councilmember Barry responded "I know that" and then went right on talking. He would not let formal rules get in the way of accomplishing his goals.

Mayor Barry worked every day to bring more dignity, more security, and more opportunity to DC residents. It's a legacy we'll never forget and one we'll proudly be working to carry forward.